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DON'S 'APPLY FROM HOME COUNTRY' RULE FOR GREEN CARDS DRAWS ANGER

Democratic lawmakers and immigration advocates on Saturday demanded that the Trump administration withdraw its new green card policy

DEMOCRATS CALL IT ATTACK ON LEGAL IMMIGRATION

Democratic lawmakers vowed to pursue every avenue to fight against the new policy, which they said will make legal immigration to the US much more harder. They also highlighted it will separate families when a member has to leave the US to apply for green card from their home country, a process that in some cases could stretch on months or a year

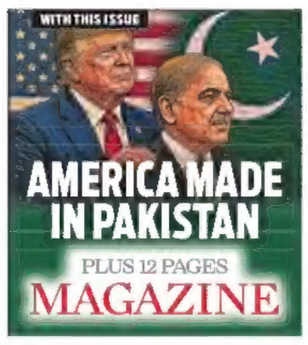
WILL HELP CURB ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION: USCIS

- The earlier policy allowed foreigners to change from non-immigrant to immigrant by applying for "adjustment of status" from within the US
- The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said the new policy cuts the need to find and remove those who "slip into the shadows" and remain in the US illegally after being denied residency

6,00,000

PEOPLE WHO ARE ALREADY IN THE U.S. APPLY FOR GREEN CARD EACH YEAR

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI



Modi gets Trump's invite for early visit

Rubio hands over letter; unveils America First visa plan

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

IN his first visit to India as US Secretary of State to shore up ties that have come under strain in recent times, Marco Rubio met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday and handed over an invitation from President Donald Trump for an early visit to the White House. He later described India as a "cornerstone" of Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy and said an "America First" visa schedule prioritising business professionals will deepen economic ties with New Delhi.

Rubio, who arrived in New Delhi after a stop in Kolkata earlier in the day, held wide-ranging discussions with Modi on bilateral ties, regional security and the Indo-Pacific ahead of the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting scheduled in Delhi on May 26. After the meeting, Modi said the two sides discussed "sustained progress" in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership as well as regional and global security issues.

"India and the United States will continue to work closely for the global good," Modi said on X. Speaking at the inauguration of the new US Embassy Support Annex Building here, Rubio underlined India's growing importance in Washington's strategic calculations.

"It is at the cornerstone of this important partnership between us and India, which, as I said, is an incredibly important one," Rubio said. "It's the reason why I'm here on this visit — to reaffirm those ties, to build upon them. We think in the months ahead, we're going to have even more exciting and new announcements to make about the development and strengthening of the relationship between the two countries." The US Secretary of State also announced a new "America First" visa schedule designed to prioritise business professionals and strengthen commercial engagement between the two countries.

"We're introducing a new America First visa schedule that prioritises business professionals that strengthen these ties," Rubio said, adding that the new embassy facility would help improve efficiency and support America's diplomatic and security operations in India.

Rubio also highlighted the personal chemistry between Modi and Trump. "You can just see the connection between them. The connection between leaders is incredibly important. These are two very serious leaders who are focused not just on the short term but on the long term," he said. P9

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a meeting, in New Delhi on Saturday | PTI

> We had a phenomenal meeting today with the PM. It's a relationship that is growing
>
> Sergio Gor, US Ambassador

At Mother House

Earlier in the day, Rubio visited the Mother House of Saint Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata before flying to Delhi

Net fuel rates up by ₹5/L after 3rd hike

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

PRICES of petrol and diesel went up by up to 91 paise per litre on Saturday, the third such hike in less than 10 days, raising the cumulative retail fuel rates across the country by nearly ₹5 a litre.

In Delhi, petrol became costlier by 87 paise — from ₹98.64 to ₹99.51 per litre. Diesel rates jumped by 91 paise — from ₹91.58 to ₹92.49 a litre. Likewise, the cost of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) went up by ₹1 per kg, taking its retail cost in the Capital to ₹81.09 per kg. The latest hike comes amid disruption in global oil and gas supplies following the conflict in West Asia.

Despite the hikes, fuel retailers continue to absorb significant losses. Amid long queues and reports of shortage at petrol pumps and some outlets running dry, Indian Oil said there was no overall shortage, adding fuel outage at certain retail outlets as "highly localised".

5 die as lorry rams into SUV in K'buragi

Mangled remains of the car after colliding head-on with a lorry

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kalaburagi

FIVE persons travelling in an SUV were killed on the spot when a lorry collided with it head-on on the National Highway 150 between Halakarti and Ladlapur villages under the Wadi police limits around 12.30 am on Saturday.

Kalaburagi Superintendent of Police Adduru Srinivasalu said the lorry was going from Gujarat to Tamil Nadu, while the SUV was going towards Wadi town from Yadgir. All the occupants of the SUVdied on the spot. P7

Fresh funding for MGNREGA throws up questions on parallel ops with GRAM-G

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

EVEN as the Centre prepares to roll out the new rural employment scheme, VB GRAM-G from July 1, it has been learnt that it may allocate an additional ₹15,000 crore to MGNREGA, raising fresh questions over the future of the existing scheme, which is to be repealed under the new framework.

The development comes even as the government published draft rules for the VB-GRAM-G Act on Saturday for public consultation. The draft proposes that Central allocations to states under the new scheme will be determined normatively using the horizontal devolution formula recommended by the 16th Finance Commission.

According to sources, the additional allocation could be released immediately to the two-decade-old UPA-era MGNREGA. However, there is still no clarity on whether the existing scheme will continue during the transition phase.

The development comes amid Opposition demands for a smooth shift from MGNREGA to GRAM-G, with the government earlier assuring a six-month transition period to avoid disruption in rural employment and wage payments.

Opposition leaders have also maintained that MGNREGA cannot be discontinued abruptly, given its role in providing rural livelihood support.

In the Union Budget, the Centre allocated ₹95,692.31 crore for GRAM-G and ₹30,000 crore for MGNREGA to clear pending liabilities. "Now the government is planning to pump in nearly 50% more than the original budget allocation to MGNREGA," a source said.

At a recent meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, ministry officials are learnt to have informed members that 25 states have already agreed to implement the GRAM-G programme and that administrative and policy preparations are underway.

Oppn states okay with 60:40 fund

While Oppn criticised the 60:40 Centre-state funding model as burdensome, sources said most Oppn-ruled states, except Jharkhand, have come on board. "Telangana, Himachal, Kerala accepted it. K'taka agreed under protest," a source said. Previous DMK govt, too, had consented

3 ZONES FORMED

Karnataka hikes minimum wages in 81 sectors by 60%

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state government has revised minimum wages for workers across the state by 60%, Labour Minister **Santosh Lad** announced, calling it the fulfilment of a long-pending demand of labourers. The revised wage structure is expected to benefit lakhs of workers employed across 81 scheduled sectors in the state.

The revised notification, issued by the Labour Department on Friday, aims to provide greater financial security to workers in the unorganised and specified sectors. Lad said the revision had been taken up in compliance with Supreme Court directions to fix minimum wages.

For the first time, all scheduled employment has been brought under a single notification, replacing the earlier system of separate classifications for four sectors. The state has now been divided into three wage zones – Zone-1 comprising the Greater Bengaluru Area; Zone-2 covering other city corporations and district headquarters; and Zone-3 for the remaining areas.

Workers have been classified into four categories: unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled. Highly skilled workers in Bengaluru and surrounding areas under Zone-1 will now receive a minimum monthly wage of Rs 31,114, while skilled workers will receive Rs 28,285. P7

Phogat wins the dangal at Delhi HC

UDAYAN KISHORE @ New Delhi

THE Delhi High Court has allowed celebrated wrestler Vinesh Phogat to participate in the upcoming Asian Games 2026 selection trials to be held from May 30 to 31, saying motherhood cannot be treated as a professional impediment.

A bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia called Phogat "an internationally acclaimed athlete" and said she could not meet the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) "exclusionary" selection policy only because she was on maternity leave.

"It is acknowledged that motherhood cannot be treated as a professional impediment or a circumstance warranting adverse treatment. A legal and regulatory framework that either expressly or impliedly disadvantages a woman on account of pregnancy or post-partum recovery would clearly violate the principles of non-discrimination enshrined in Articles 14 (right to equality) and 21 (right to life) of the Constitution of India," the division bench noted in its order on Friday. The order was uploaded on the court website on Saturday.

The bench also slammed the "deplorable" show-cause notice issued to Phogat by WFI, in which the wrestling body said she had caused a "national embarrassment" by getting disqualified from the Paris Olympics for being overweight ahead of her gold-medal match.

"Such observations made in the SCN (show-cause notice), despite the award issued by CAS (Court of Arbitration for Sport), which clearly held that there was no wrongdoing on the part of the appellant (Phogat), appear to be pre-mediated and are ex-facie misconceived and ought to have been avoided," the bench said.

> The law must ensure that motherhood does not become a ground for exclusion or marginalisation of female athletes, such as the appellant
>
> Delhi High Court

Trials to be recorded

The bench ordered the selection trials, be video-recorded and an independent observer from Sports Authority of India and Indian Olympic Association each remain present

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17TH KIIT INTERNATIONAL CHESS FESTIVAL 2026

23rd - 30th May 2026
Viswanathan Anand International Chess Hall, KIIT

Organized by: KIIT-DU, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

India's highest prize pool
₹1.31 Crore

4000+ Players & Officials
40 Countries
25 Grandmasters
2000 Parents
50 International Masters
85+ International Titleholders

My sincere thanks to FIDE, AICF, Odisha Chess Association, all players, officials and everyone associated with this grand chess festival.
My best wishes to all the participants.

Prof. Achyuta Samanta
Founder, KIIT, KISS & KIMS

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